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Newsletter

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GRADUATE SCHOOL ★ USDA

November 16, 1961

To the Faculty, Committee Members and others associated with the Graduate School:

Events of Special Interest

- December 5 Faculty Luncheon - Dr. Harold F. Breimyer, and the Instructional Improvement Committee - 12:00 Noon Rm. 6962, South Building, U. S. Department of Agriculture
- December 15 We are going to play back the historical speech of Henry A. Wallace's in the Centennial Lecture Series
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Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt will be our luncheon speaker, January 9. We will hold the luncheon at the National Press Club and you may make reservations for as many guests as you wish to bring. Price of the tickets is \$3.00 each.

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GROWTH THROUGH AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS is the title of a new book to be released by the Graduate School in mid-December. The paperback, edited by Wayne D. Rasmussen, will carry the five Centennial lectures in the series completed November 1, when former Secretary Henry A. Wallace drew an over-flow crowd.

Those of you who missed the Wallace Lecture are invited to hear a tape-recording of it in Jefferson Auditorium on December 15, at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Wallace's visit marked a happy reunion for officials who served in the Department with him. Among our guests were the first Under Secretary of Agriculture, Rexford G. Tugwell, and his two immediate successors,

M. L. Wilson and Paul Appleby, and H. C. Taylor, first head of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and a leader in the establishment of the Graduate School.

"Few organizations have been so alive with scientific curiosity over the 100 years of its existence," Mr. Wallace said, and he pointed out that "The Graduate School, which my father and E. D. Ball organized 40 years ago, had helped to stimulate this curiosity."

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Our next lecture series will present five scholars--Henry S. Commager, Amherst; Maxwell H. Goldberg, University of Massachusetts; Hans J. Morgenthau, University of Chicago; Robert Blakely, University of Iowa; and Stephen K. Bailey, Syracuse University. These are the men we are bringing to Washington on successive weeks as leaders in a pilot program, "Critical Issues and Decisions for Federal Executives."

The public lectures begin Thursday, January 25, with Dr. Commager speaking on "The American Experience, Is It Exportable;" Dr. Goldberg will speak the following week on "The Humanities, Critical Issues, and the Quest for Wholeness." Dr. Morgenthau is the next speaker, his subject, "The Real Issue Between the United States and the Soviet Union. Dr. Blakely speaks the following week on "Freedom and Responsibility in Creative Arts." Dr. Bailey will close the series with a lecture on "Is Congress Obsolete."

The response to this pilot program far exceeded our expectations. We received 70 applications from high level Federal officials to enroll in the seminar. The executives selected to take part in this initial humanities program come from 28 agencies.

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Our whole attitude toward the adult's ability to learn has been undergoing a change in the past 10 years, according to Professor Howard McClusky of the University of Michigan.

Dr. McClusky, who spoke at our November faculty luncheon, reminded us that the long accepted curve of learning advanced by Thorndike shows a peak at the age of 24 and a decline in learning ability of about one per cent a year for the next 20 years.

Further research in this field does not wholly bear out Thorndike's findings. Recent findings confirm his conclusion that the learner's speed of reaction declines as he grows older. His ability to learn some things, however, increases. In other words, the adult needs to set his own pace of learning, and older people are more successful if they are not put under pressure.

Interpreting Thorndike's law of readiness as it applies to the adult learner, Dr. McClusky advises the teachers of adults to keep two things in mind: the chronological age of the student because there are marked differences at different points in life; and the cultural context in which the learner finds himself.

"In teaching adults," Dr. McClusky said, "you have to allow for 'set' or 'stance'. The individual is the integrator of his environment. He tunes out what he is not 'set' to hear. You can't communicate with a person until he plays back the 'sets' that show his personality. That is why it is important for the teacher of adults to go through the patient process of getting to know his students and counseling with them.

"Man is a goal-seeking animal. The evidence in psychological research shows increasingly that we are made not only by our past and present but also by the projection of our goals. The teachers of adults ought to know what the goals of the students are."

Dr. McClusky noted that educators have done a fine job of organizing "input" of subject matter but a poor one of organizing feedback. Research designed to measure the effectiveness of lectures and discussions as teaching methods has produced no clear cut evidence favoring one method over the other for information. The findings, however, give an edge to the discussion method as a means of changing attitudes. And there is growing evidence that response to either method is a product of personality.

If you would like to read more about Dr. McClusky's studies and other research on learning we recommend his article summarizing recent studies in the June 1959 issue of the Review of Education Research.

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With the Federal government using more than 600 automatic data processing systems in more than 400 locations and investing nearly \$15 million a year in additional systems, the prospect is that our new book, AUTOMATIC DATA PROCESSING SEMINAR FOR FEDERAL EXECUTIVES, will be a good seller. The 282-page, spiral-bound book edited by B. Ralph Stauber contains lectures by 18 authorities in government and industry who have participated in the on-going series of seminars the Graduate School began in the fall of 1959. You can obtain copies of the book in the Graduate School Bookstore. The price is \$4.50 per copy with the usual discount to members of the faculty and our committees.

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"Promise of the Life Sciences," our lecture series of last year has become a very active part of the Graduate School. Vera Jensen reports the demand for the five films has been brisk both from our own rental service and the university libraries where we have placed copies in 15 states. She also reports the book is moving very well. Thirteen hundred copies were sold in the past two months.

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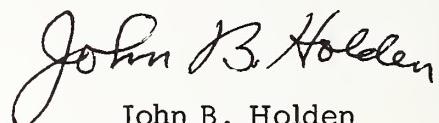
Our congratulations and good wishes to:

Eva B. Adams, former member of our faculty, who was recently named Director of the United States Mint;

Donald G. Klumpp, former student in the class, Creative Photography Through Composition, who won an award of \$1,000 in the 1961 Popular Photography International Photo Contest.

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Sincerely,



John B. Holden
Director